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REMARKS

Claims 1 through 18 and new Claims 19 and 20 are pending in the application.

Page 1, line 2 of the Application-as-filed has been amended to insert a priority claim, as recommended by the Examiner.

Page 4, line 28 and Page 6, line 20 of the Application-as-filed have been amended to correct a typographical error in the spelling of the term "embodiment".

Page 6, line 20 of the Application-as-filed has additionally been amended to address grammatical issues, i.e. to delete the term "picture of" immediately preceeding the term "drawing".

Page 6, line 31 of the Application-as-filed has been amended to delete the phrase "at the starting point."

Page 7, line 3 of the Application-as-filed has been amended to delete the phrase "an invisible" immediate preceeding the term "winding station" and to insert the term "(not shown)" immediately thereafter.

Page 7, line 5 of the Application-as-filed has been amended to delete the term "possible" immediately preceeding the phrase "recirculation of the regenerated transfer support web."

Page 7, line 10 of the Application-as-filed has been amended to correct the spelling of the term "saving."

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Claim 1 has been amended to reflect that the composite of transfer support web and coating is advantageously dried. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 4, lines 18 through 21.

Claim 1 has also been amended to reflect that the humidity of the composite of transfer support web and dried coating is advantageously adjusted to about 20 to 60 %. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 5, lines 12 through 13 and lines 28 through 29.

Claim 1 has further been amended to reflect that the transfer support web is advantageously reusable. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 1, lines 5 through 9.

Claim 2 has been amended to conform to United States practice by replacing the term "such as" with the term "selected from."

Claim 3, 7, 8 and 9 have been amended to conform to Claim 1 as-amended.

Claim 6 has been canceled, as its subject matter has been incorporated into Claim 1.

Claim 9 has been amended to reflect that in beneficial embodiments the laminating step is performed by a cooling device. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed.

Claim 10 has been amended to delete the term "at the starting point." Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed.

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Claim 11 has been amended to delete the phrase "paper-like material." Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed.

Claim 13 has been amended to recite the term "mechanical treatment" and to remove the phrase "of adhering foreign particles." Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 7, lines 3 through 4.

Claim 14 has been amended to conform to Claim 13.

Claims 15 and 16 have been amended to depend from Claim 12, thereby providing antecedent basis.

Claim 17 has been amended to positively recite the presence of a transfer support web. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed.

Claim 17 has also been amended to reflect that the coating station is used to coat the transfer support web. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 6, lines 25 through 26.

Claim 17 has additionally been amended to recite the presence of a heating device to dry the coating on the transfer support web. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 3, lines 29 through 31.

Claim 17 has further been amended to recite that the laminating station applies an intermediate support material onto the dried coating. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 5, lines 5 through 15.

Claim 17 has additionally been amended to emphasize that the separating rolls separate the transfer support web from the intermediate support material/coating/transfer

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support web laminate. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 5, lines 25 through 30.

Claim 17 has also been amended to highlight that the regeneration station is used to treat the separated transfer support web. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 6, line 3.

Claim 18 has been canceled, as its subject matter has been incorporated into Claim 17.

Claims 19 and 20 have been added to complete the record for examination and highlight particularly advantageous embodiments of the invention.

Claim 19 reflects advantageous embodiments in which the coating consists essentially of organic raw materials and optional additives. Support for Claim 19 can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 2, lines 22 through 23 and Page 3, lines 13 through 17.

Claim 20 reflects beneficial aspects of such advantageous embodiments in which the organic raw material is selected from polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, a cellulose derivative, polyvinyl acetate, polyethylene glycol, alginate, carrageenan, xanthan, gelatin, mixtures thereof or copolymers thereof. Support for Claim 20 can be found in the Application-as-filed, for example on Page 2, lines 21 through 27.

Reexamination and reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of all rejections, and formal notification of the allowability of the pending claims are earnestly solicited in light of the remarks which follow.

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Priority Claim

The Office Action objects to the priority claim of the instant application. Applicants respectfully confirm that this application claims priority to PCT Application no. PCT/EP03/00334, filed January 15, 2003, which further claims priority to United States Provisional Application 60/351,745, filed January 25, 2002.

Applicants' Representative respectfully submits that the required priority references to the PCT and provisional application were submitted in the declaration. The Examiner's attention is kindly directed to the PTO Patent Information Retrieval System (PAIR); Image File Wrapper; Mail Room Date: 7-20-04; Document Description: Oath or Declaration Filed; Page 1. The information concerning the benefit claim was subsequently recognized by the Office, as shown by its inclusion on the Filing Receipt, mailed January 11, 2005. Unfortunately, a copy of the foregoing Filing Receipt is not available within the PAIR system. Applicants' Representative will be pleased to forward a copy of the Filing Receipt, should the Examiner deem it necessary.

Accordingly, a "Cross-reference to Related Applications" claiming the foregoing priority documents has been inserted as the first sentence of the Application-as-filed, as requested by the Examiner. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Objection to the Drawings

The drawings stand objected to, as the Office Action urges that the drawings do not show every feature of the invention specified in methods Claims 10 and 16. Applicants respectfully make of record that Figure 1 of the above-referenced application is not necessary for the understanding of the invention. Applicants further submit that drawings are not required for process claims including the term "method" in their introductory phrase, as provided in Claims 10 and 16. MPEP 608.02. Furthermore, the

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noted the "adhesive" of Claim 10 and the "take up" of Claim 16 are merely details which are not essential for a proper understanding of the instant method claims. MPEP 608.02(d). In particular, the take-up device objected to in Claim 16 is well known in the art, as are adhesive strips. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that a drawing change is not required.

Out of an abundance of caution, however, Applicants have amended the Application-as-filed on Page 6, line 31 to reflect that the identifier "B" on Figure 1 schematically represents the recited "adhesive strip" in Claim 10. Applicants are further prepared to cancel method Claim 10 (with strong traverse), should the Examiner ultimately deem it necessary to avoid abandonment of the application.

Applicants are similarly prepared either to cancel method Claim 16 (again, with strong traverse) or, alternatively, to provide a Figure 2 that includes the recited take up device, should the Examiner ultimately deem it necessary.

Objection to the Specification

The disclosure is objected to on Page 4, line 28. The Office Action notes that "embodiment" is spelled incorrectly and should be changed to "embodiment". The correct spelling of embodiment has been inserted at Pages 4, line 28 and Page 6, line 20. In addition, a spelling correction for the word "savings" has been made on Page 7, line 10.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

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Section 112 Rejection

Claims 1 through 16 stand rejected for lack of enablement for an "invisible" winding station. Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing term does not refer to the visibility of the actual winder, but rather its omission from Figure 1. However, solely to advance prosecution, the Application-as-filed on Page 7, line 3 has been amended to replace the term "invisible" with the more widely accepted term "not shown." Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 16 stands rejected, apparently over the phrase "after storage." Claim 1 has been amended to conform to the embodiments of Claim 16, i.e. Claim 1 has been amended to reflect that the transfer support web is "reusable." In advantageous embodiments, such reusable transfer support webs are endless loops, as recited in Claim 17. In alternative embodiments, the transfer support web is taken up and reused after storage, as indicated in Claim 16. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 2 stands rejected over the phrase "such as." The phrase "such as" in Claim 2 has been replaced with the phrase "selected from," in conformance with United States practice. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 10 stands rejected over the phrase "the starting point." The foregoing phrase has been deleted from Claim 10. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 11 stands rejected over the phrase "paper like." The foregoing phrase has been deleted from Claim 10. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 16 stands rejected over the term "the regenerated transfer support web," due

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to insufficient antecedent basis. Applicants respectfully note that Claim 15 recites the foregoing phrase, as well. Claims 15 and 16 have been amended to depend from Claim 12, thereby providing antecedent basis. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

The Claimed Invention is Patentable
in Light of the Art of Record

Claims 1 through 6, 9, 11, 12, and 15 stand rejected over United States Patent No. 5,006,189 to Tsukamoto et al. ("US 189") in view of United States Patent No. 4,473,422 to Parker et al. ("US 422"). Claims 7 and 8 stand rejected over US 189 in view of US 422 and further in view of United States Patent No. 3,869,328 to Instance ("US 328"). Claim 10 stands rejected over US 189 in view of US 422, and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,863,628 to Barry ("US 628"). Claim 13 stands rejected over US 189 in view of US 422 and further in view of United States Patent No. 2,820,716 to Harmon et al. ("US 716"). Claim 14 stands rejected over US 189 in view of US 422 and further in view of US 716, and even further in view of United States Patent No. 6,090,238 to Smith ("US 238"). Claims 17 and 18 stand rejected over US 189 in view of United States Patent No. 3,823,209 to Birkhead, Jr. et al. ("US 209").

It may be useful to briefly consider the invention before addressing the merits of the rejection.

The flat administration of pharmaceutical products is known. Medicament strips based on gelatin-like material are known, for example. Active substance-loaded films for consumption outside the pharmaceutical field are known, as well. Such films can be produced by casting onto a support material. The composite support material is then taken up on a roll. Unfortunately, the active-ingredients can diffuse from the coating into the support material over time. The support material cannot be used again, generating large amounts of waste. Furthermore, the transport of thin films from one surface to

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another has heretofore been considered problematic, due to the presence of residual film on the support material.

Surprisingly, Applicants have found that thin films may be adequately transferred from a first substrate to a second by adjusting the coating humidity within a particular range. More particularly, Applicants have found that a first film may be coated, such as from an aqueous solution. The coated film is subsequently dried. The humidity of the dried coating is then adjusted to within a particular range, and the humidified coating laminated to a second film. Quite unexpectedly, the humidification of the coating allows a ready transfer of the coating from the first film to the second film, using a series of rolls or the like. (The Examiner's attention is kindly directed to the Application-as-filed on Page 5, lines 11 – 29). Applicants have additionally determined that the improved film transfer of the instant invention allows the first substrate to be reused, especially after one or more regeneration steps.

According, the claims are directed to methods of coating transfer that include applying coating onto a surface of a transfer support web and subsequently drying the composite of transfer support web and coating. The humidity of the dried transfer support web and coating composite is then adjusted to about 20 to 60 %, and an intermediate support material laminated to the humidity adjusted coating. The composite of intermediate support layer and humidity adjusted coating are then separated from the transfer support web, wound up and stored. The transfer support web may be reused after the separation step.

In particularly advantageous embodiments, the coating consists essentially of organic raw materials and optional additives, as recited in newly added Claim 19.

In especially beneficial aspects of such embodiments, the organic raw material is selected from polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, a cellulose derivative, polyvinyl

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acetate, polyethylene glycol, alginate, carrageenan, xanthan, gelatin, mixtures thereof or copolymers thereof, as recited in newly added Claim 20.

The claimed invention is patentable in light of the cited references.

US 189 is directed to thermal printing ribbons. (Col. 1, lines 14 – 41). US 189 disposes molten heat-soluble material onto a substrate. A sheet member is then disposed on top of the molten coating, and the heat-soluble material cooled. (Col. 1, lines 49 – 55 and Col. 2, lines 33 – 45). After cooling, the sheet member is removed, and the heat-soluble coating remains on the substrate as a coating. (Col. 2, lines 57 – 61 and Col. 3, lines 43 – 46). US 189 emphasizes the lack of coating transfer, expressly noting that “what is interesting” is that the heat-soluble material does not remain on the sheet member after initial processing. (Col. 3, lines 24 – 26).

The coated substrate may then be used to form a printed article, referred to as an “image carrying substrate.” US 189 indicates that the image carrying substrate may be erased by contacting the surface of the image carrying substrate with an additional layer of heat-soluble material that has been supplied as a coating on a cleaning sheet member. (Figure 5, References 501 and 505). The additional heat-soluble material is melted, and the image carrying substrate and cleaning sheet member separated. Upon separating, the entirety of the heat-soluble material (i.e. the image material and the additional layer) is retained on the coated cleaning sheet. (Col. 5, line 59 – Col. 6, line 11 and Figs 4 and 5). US 189 utilizes a combination of a differential radius of curvature and cohesion to retain the coating on the substrate and/or cleaning member. (Col. 2, line 62 – Col. 3, line 14 and Col. 5, lines 29 – 45).

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US 189 does not teach or suggest the recited methods in which a coating is initially applied and then transferred. US 189 instead teaches the retention of the coating upon the substrate during ribbon formation. In fact, US 189 emphasizes the coating retention on the substrate layer by noting the phenomenon as "interesting." In fact, Applicants respectfully submit that to modify US 189 so as to provide the recited transfer would render US 189 unfit for ribbon production.

US 189, directed exclusively to heat-soluble coatings, further fails to teach or suggest the recited drying of the coated transfer support web.

US 189, relying on radius of curvature to retain the heat-soluble material on the coated substrate, likewise fails to teach or suggest the recited step of adjusting the humidity of the composite of transfer support web and coating to about 20 to 60 %.

And US 189 most certainly does not teach or suggest the foregoing methods in which the transfer support web is reusable.

US 189, teaching the lamination of melted coatings, also does not teach or suggest the recited laminating step employing a cooling drum, as recited in Claim 9.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention is patentable in light of US 189, considered either alone or in combination with the art of record.

US 422 does not cure the deficiencies in US 189.

US 422 is directed to metalized paper or board products. US 422 initially forms a multilayered coating on a release-coated carrier layer. The multilayered coating includes a top coat, a metal layer, a tie coat and an outer pressure-sensitive

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adhesive coating. (Col. 3, lines 30 – 50). The pressure-sensitive adhesive coating is brought into contact with a paper or board, and the carrier layer is removed. (Col. 3, lines 60 – 65). US 422 generically notes that the carrier layer may be in the form of a continuous belt and/or reused. (Col. 4, lines 1 – 5 and Col. 6, lines 50 – 54).

US 422 discloses use of a top coat solvent mixture that results a continuous layer, i.e. does not “crawl,” when applied to the release-coated carrier layer. (Col. 7, lines 22 – 47). A second impetus of US 422 is the incorporation of a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating to bond the multilayered metal coating to the paper or board, rather than a traditional “wet” adhesive emulsion. (Col. 2, lines 54 – 67 and Col. 3, lines 16 – 23). In addition to the pressure-sensitive adhesive providing suitable bonding, the release coat on the carrier layer is said to assure “a clean separation.” (Col. 6, lines 60 – 65).

US 422, incorporating pressure sensitive and release layers to impart bonding, does not teach or suggest the recited step of adjusting coating humidity to about 20 to 60%.

Nor does US 422 teach or suggest the subsequent lamination of such humidity adjusted products within a laminating device comprising a cooling drum, as recited in Claim 9. Rather than the recited cooling, US 422 instead discloses the combination of pressure sensitive adhesive and release coating to ensure bonding.

And US 422, requiring a metal layer, most certainly does not teach or suggest the recited coating consisting essentially of organic raw materials, as recited in Claim 19. Nor does US 422 teach or suggest coatings formed from the beneficial organic raw materials recited in Claim 20.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention is patentable in light of US 422.

There would have been no motivation to have combined these references. US 189 is directed to erasable printing ribbons. US 422 is directed to metalized paper having an improved top coat solvent composition. These are altogether different fields of endeavor and problems solved, to say the least.

However, even if these references were combined (which Applicants did not), the claimed invention would not result. In particular, the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of the resulting transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 %, and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite would not have resulted.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 through 6, 9, 11, 12 and 15 are patentable in light of US 189 and US 422, considered either alone or in combination.

Claims 7 and 8 are likewise patentable in light of the foregoing references and further in light of US 328.

US 328 is merely directed to processes to make a continuous reel of self-adhesive labels. (Col. 1, lines 5 – 8 and lines 38 - 41). The labels may be larger, thus allowing a wider variety of printing techniques to be utilized. (Col. 1, lines 20 – 34). The labels are initially cut and supplied as a flat stack. The flat stack of labels is then fed to a conveyor and an adhesive applied. (Col. 2, lines 31 – 42 and Col. 1, lines 41 - 50). US 328 generically notes that the adhesive is dried “by hot air.” (Col. 2, lines 49 – 51 and Col. 1, lines 54 - 56). The adhesive coated labels are subsequently positioned on a continuous

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web of backing paper that has been coated with a release coating, and the resulting product is taken up on a reel. (Col. 2, lines 54 – 59 and Col. 1, lines 57 - 60).

US 328 does not teach or suggest coating transfer, much less the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 % and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite.

Nor does US 328, generically noting drying “by hot air,” teach or suggest such beneficial methods that further dry the resulting coating in a hot air chamber at temperatures in the range of from 40 to 120 °C, as recited in Claim 7.

Thus US 328 most certainly does not teach or suggest such beneficial methods that further dry the resulting coating in a hot air chamber at temperatures in the range of from 50 to 100 °C, as recited in Claim 8.

There likewise would have been no motivation to have combined these references. US 189 is directed to erasable printing ribbons. US 422 is directed to metalized paper having an improved top coat solvent composition. US 328 is directed to reelable self-adhesive labels. These are altogether different fields of endeavor and problems solved, to say the least.

However, even if these references were combined (which Applicants did not), the claimed invention would not result. In particular, the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 %, and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite would not have resulted, much less the advantageous drying temperatures of Claims 7 and 8.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 7 and 8 are patentable in light of US 189, US 422 and US 328, considered either alone or in combination.

Claim 10 is similarly patentable over US 189 and US 422 in combination with US 628.

US 628 is directed to leaflet or booklet labels with multiple overlayers for pharmaceutical containers and the like. (Col. 1, lines 5 – 14 and 44 – 49 and Col. 3, lines 36 - 47). The labels are carried on a release material. To form the labels, a release material is initially coated with an adhesive, and the leaflet applied. (Col. 8, lines 35 – 45). Thereafter, a self-adhesive over-laminate is applied over the leaflet. (Col. 8, lines 50 – 55). A self-adhesive over-label is then applied to the over-laminate and the finished label is die-cut and wound on a reel. (Col. 8, lines 55 – 59 and Col. 8, line 65 – Col. 9, line 7).

US 628 does not teach or suggest methods of coating transfer, much less the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 % and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite. Nor does US 628 teach or suggest such methods of coating transfer further incorporating an adhesive strip, as recited in Claim 10.

There likewise would have been no motivation to have combined these references. US 189 is directed to erasable printing ribbons. US 422 is directed to metalized paper having an improved top coat solvent composition. US 628 is directed to booklet labels provided with over-layers. These are altogether different fields of endeavor and problems solved, to say the least.

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However, even if these references were combined (which Applicants did not), the claimed invention would not result. In particular, the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 %, and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite would not have resulted, much less the advantageous adhesive strip of Claim 10.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 10 is patentable in light of US 189, US 422 and US 628, considered either alone or in combination.

Claim 13 is similarly patentable over US 189 and US 422 in view of US 716.

US 716 is directed to nonwoven fabrics that are bound in a pattern using a charged binder. (Col. 1, lines 25 – 35, Col. 3, lines 3 – 6 and Col. 6, lines 39 - 46). The charged binder is applied to a nonwoven fabric as the fabric passes over a drum containing spiked electrodes. (Col. 3, lines 11 – 16). The electrodes are positioned so as to deposit the charged binder in a pattern within the nonwoven. (Col. 3, lines 70 – 73). The nonwoven is subsequently consolidated by softening the binder with solvent and applying pressure. (Col. 4, lines 50 – 55 and 67 – 71 and Col. 1, lines 28 - 31). The charged binder is deposited onto the fabric from a continuously moving belt. (Col. 2, lines 49 – 54 and Fig. 1). The moving belt is cleaned with brushes after the charged binder has been deposited. (Col. 4, lines 6 – 12).

US 716, directed to consolidated nonwoven fabrics, does not teach or suggest methods of coating transfer, much less the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 % and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite. Nor does US 716 teach or suggest such

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methods of coating transfer that regenerate a transfer support web by mechanically removing residual coating, as reflected in Claim 13.

There likewise would have been no motivation to have combined these references. US 189 is directed to erasable printing ribbons. US 422 is directed to metalized paper having an improved top coat solvent composition. US 716 is directed to the consolidation of nonwoven fabrics using charged particles. These are altogether different fields of endeavor and problems solved, to say the least.

However, even if these references were combined (which Applicants did not), the claimed invention would not result. In particular, the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 % and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite would not have resulted, much less the advantageous mechanical regeneration of Claim 13.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 13 is patentable in light of US 189, US 422 and US 716, considered either alone or in combination.

Claim 14 is patentable over the foregoing references and further in view of US 238.

US 238 is directed to methods to remove vinyl decals and graphics from hard substrates, such as cars and the like. (Col. 1, lines 37 – 42). US 238 teaches the use of a high pressure washer from multiple distances, followed by a citrus based solvent wash. (Col. 1, lines 45 – 61).

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US 238, directed to decal removal, does not teach or suggest methods of coating transfer, much less the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 % and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite. Nor does US 238 teach or suggest such methods of coating transfer that regenerate a transfer support web by initially mechanically removing residual coating and then washing it, as reflected in Claim 14.

There most certainly would have been no motivation to have combined these references. US 189 is directed to erasable printing ribbons. US 422 is directed to metalized paper having an improved top coat solvent composition. US 716 consolidates nonwoven fabrics using charged particles. US 238 removes vinyl decals from cars. These are altogether different fields of endeavor and problems solved, to say the least.

However, even if these references were combined (which Applicants did not), the claimed invention would not result. In particular, the recited methods of transferring a coating from the surface of a transfer web by adjusting the humidity of a transfer web/coating composite to about 20 to 60 % and laminating an intermediate material on the humidity adjusted composite would not have resulted, much less the advantageous mechanical regeneration of the transfer web and subsequent washing of Claim 14.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 14 is patentable in light of US 189, US 422, US 716, and US 238, considered either alone or in combination.

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Claims 17 and 18 are likewise patentable over US 189 in view of US 209.

US 209 is directed to methods of forming a self-supporting film from melted particulates. (Col. 1, lines 33 – 37). US 209 more particularly provides a method of uniformly heating fusible particulates disposed on a release coated substrate. (Col. 4, lines 9 – 14 and lines 61 – 71) The side of the substrate opposite the particulates is in intimate contact with an insulating blanket. (Col. 3, lines 6 – 18).

The release mold substrate is initially directed through a powder deposition station. The deposited powder is subsequently directed to a fusing station and then cooled. The cooled fused sheet, which is self-supporting, is separated from the release mold substrate and taken up on a roll. The release mold substrate is likewise taken up on a roll. (Col. 7, lines 5 – 22).

US 209, directed to the formation of a self-supporting film, does not teach or suggest devices by which a coating is transferred. Consequently, US 209 does not teach or suggest the recited laminating station or separating rolls that separate the transfer support web from the intermediate support material/coating/transfer support web laminate.

US 209 is further directed exclusively to films formed by melting. Consequently, US 209 does not teach or suggest the recited device comprising a drying device to dry the coating on the transfer support web. In fact, Applicants respectfully submit that to modify US 209 so as to dry (versus melt) the particulate deposited upon its release mold substrate would render it unfit for its intended purpose.

There most certainly would have been no motivation to have combined these references. US 189 is directed to erasable printing ribbons. US 209 forms self-supporting films from fused particulates. These are altogether different fields of endeavor and problems solved, to say the least.

However, even if these references were combined (which Applicants did not), the claimed invention would not result. In particular, the recited device including a heating device to dry a coating on a transfer support web, which coating is then transferred to an intermediate web via separating rolls would not have resulted.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 17 is patentable in light of US 189 and US 209, considered either alone or in combination.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that Applicants have made a significant and important contribution to the art, which is neither disclosed nor suggested in the art. It is believed that all of pending Claims 1 through 5, 7 through 17, 19 and 20 are now in condition for immediate allowance. It is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned if any questions remain to expedite examination of this application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those which may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time and/or fees are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2193.

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Respectfully submitted,

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